

LITHUANIA:

National Report on the Bologna Process

Introduction: Development of Higher education system in Lithuania

Lithuania started higher education reform in 1990. Some higher education institutions were reorganised into universities, some into academies. Three-level education system was introduced. New universities were founded in big cities of Lithuania: Klaipėda and Šiauliai.

The system of higher education and research is based on the Law on Research and Higher Education passed on February 12, 1991 and the Law on Higher Education of March 21, 2000. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania the principles of autonomy, academic freedom and integration of research and higher education are enforced.

Provisions of these Laws and the Government resolutions, the initiative of higher education institutions have contributed to favourable principal changes in the system of higher education in Lithuania. As a result, the following changes took place:

- The three level system of higher education was introduced.
- An advanced system of credits for measuring the amount of study and promoting student exchange was introduced.
- A ten-point grading scale assessment system was introduced.
- An external assessment system for the quality of studies was introduced.
- The content of education has been in principle updated - the system has become more flexible, students are offered more choice, more time is provided for the students' individual work.

In 1995 the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (LCQAHE) was established. The Centre's task is to organise the expert assessment of research and pedagogical activity at research and higher education institutions, assess the qualifications related to higher education and provide information on the recognition of these qualifications. The Centre have created a system of the quality assessment of higher education in Lithuania - now they are able to conduct the assessment of undergraduate and second level studies. New programmes are included into the Register of Study Programmes only after they have been recommend by experts of the Centre.

In order to correlate the system of secondary school maturity examinations with the admission procedures at institutions of higher education, in 1996 the National Examination Centre was established at the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science. Its main activities are to organise and conduct state and school maturity examinations at Lithuanian lower secondary and secondary schools, analyse the results and conduct diagnostic investigation of the pupils' knowledge and skills.

In 1999 the first 2 private (non-state) institutions of higher education were established in Lithuania.